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EDU 402 Background Statement

I think the expectations my school district had for its students was that all students attended school everyday and worked as hard as they could to get as much out of school as we possibly could. I think school is definitely a balance of trying to help kids with their social skills as well as helping them figure out what they want to do with their futures and helping them work towards those goals. My school is a tech school with opportunities such as forestry, auto repair, auto collision, early childhood education, engineering, DECA, and so much more. So I would say the biggest goal of my high school was to prepare us for either the workforce or for our higher educational studies.

My parents expected me to do my absolute best in school. My parents made it clear that they would support whatever route I decided to take in life and certainly did not expect me to go to college as I’m the first in my family to do so. My parents certainly pushed me to do my very best and were very supportive when I made my decision that I wanted to pursue a career in teaching (although my mom really wanted me to be an english concentration instead). Although my parents don’t necessarily value education as much as some other people, they always wanted me to do my best because they believe that anything you do you have to do to the best of your ability, and there was always repercussions if my report card came back with a poor grade.

I think the business world’s expectations is basically that students are going to get good high school educations, and then some kids are going to go to college to major in business. Hopefully for the business world, a good crop of students graduate from college every year with degrees in business and then go and make a good contribution to the business world.

My expectations for myself all the way up through the school system was to just get good grades. In elementary, middle, and high school, my only goal ever was to get an A. I literally did not care about learning anything at all, and as soon as I would take a test I would just forget everything I had learned because I didn’t care. I got an A on the test which is all I cared about and then I moved on. From a fairly early age I figured out that I didn’t want to work with my hands like my dad (a carpenter) so I would most likely want to go to college, which is where my drive to get good grades came from. School always came really easy to me, I honestly don’t think I studied for a test ever. I was just always one of those students that when it came time for the test I could remember everything we had gone over and would ace the test. I think a lot of this is because I was always very engaged in my classes, not necessarily because I wanted to learn, but because I knew if I worked hard during the 6 hours I was in school I wouldn’t have to waste any free time at home studying.

In regards to my expectations for myself, I have changed drastically since I started college. I think now that I understand that what I’m learning is actually going to help me to be a better teacher, I’m more interested in actually learning and retaining the content, not just getting a good grade. I think my problem in high school was that I didn’t see the point in knowing the things I learned. If it wasn’t a history class then it wasn’t going to help me going forward so why would I try to do any more than just get a good grade and move on? Education classes have really made me realize that there’s more to school than just getting good grades.

All of my classes were exactly the same style with desks in rows facing the whiteboard at the front of the room. Basically the only variation was whether the teachers desk was at the front or the back of the classroom.

Most of my teachers pretty much just relied on lecture/note taking styles. Most of my class periods consisted of me sitting at my desk for 80 minutes listening to my teacher talk about the subject and I just sat there taking notes.

That teaching strategy worked great for me because I was very good at retaining the information I wrote down and really staying focused the whole class. Then I aced the tests or the papers and everything was great, although not terribly enjoyable.

The class that really opened my eyes to the different teaching styles was my sophomore year when I had a class called Humex. It was a combination of my history and english classes, so the class lasted two periods and had two teachers. We had so much fun in this class that I don’t even have words to explain. We really learned about the real world and how what we were learning was going to help us in life. Instead of worrying so much about individual facts and dates, they worried more about big picture and how these issues affect us. Also, the general teaching style was all hands on activity and group work. Maybe the best thing about the class though was that the two teachers had been working together for a long time, were best friends, and were great friends to all of us. They really cared about us and they really wanted to help all of us. They were funny and outgoing and just made learning fun. They are the reason I want to become a teacher and I am still very close to them today.

My high school was mainly working and middle class and 99.99999% percent white. Let’s just say I was not exposed to much diversity at all in my school district.

Basically the structure is that freshman and sophomores have teams. There are usually four teams and each team has their own teacher for each of the four major areas. So your first two years of high school you didn’t really have a lot of say in your schedule. You did have the option to sign up for a tech school your sophomore year if your schedule allowed it. Your junior and senior years you have a lot of available elective classes to take to further your education in the specific field you want to go in. I thought this system was very effective.

Personally, I took every history elective I could fit in my schedule. Although I didn’t make up my mind that I wanted social studies to be my concentration until end of my junior year, I’ve always had a love for history so that was what I loaded my schedule with. I thought I received a very good education when it came to history, my school had very good history teachers and I enjoyed every history class I took.

I think my background of taking that Humex class really affects my outlook on teaching. From that experience I know that I want to try and be as balanced as those two teachers are. That balance is the balance of having fun and having a warm, friendly environment, but at the same time learning so much information and learning why it actually matters to us.

I pretty much already covered this but I decided I wanted to be a teacher because of my Humex teachers. I have also always had a love for working with kids so that obviously is a factor as well. The teacher that made me want to concentrate on social studies was my junior year american history teacher as well as civics teacher. Like I said I already really loved history but this guy just brought such a passion and love for history, and like my Humex teachers he really focused on why the information was important and relevant. He was less of a hands on type of teacher but he was one of the few teachers I had that wasn’t caught up in the dates and the little facts. He really cared about the implications of historical events and his tests were not definition oriented but application oriented. Instead of asking what the Truman Doctrine was and what date it was signed, he asked what it did and how it affected everybody involved which I really enjoyed.

Again I’ve already sort of covered this question but I think the perfect teacher is someone who isn’t just your teacher but is also your friend. A perfect teacher is someone who is warm, but at the same time holds their students accountable and lays the law down when necessary. A perfect teacher is someone who cares about the students more than anything else, and the students know that. A perfect teacher is someone who doesn’t just spew facts, but actually cares about why those facts are relevant, they make students think deeply.

I don’t think I hope to gain anything from teaching. My goal as a teacher is to be as good as a I can be, which I would measure by how well I’m able to help my students. I just think that teachers can have such a huge impact on teenagers lives and I just want to be someone who can impact my students and help them become whatever they want to be. Obviously I want to be good at actually teaching history, but I think more importantly I want to be good at helping the students who need me, and even helping the students who don’t.

I want to contribute a drive and determination to the teaching profession. My goal is just to do everything I can to get through to my students and to help them in any way possible. I think I see the same in coaching. Obviously I am an ultra competitive individual and a big goal I have as a coach is to win win win. I think also though that when you’re with the same group of guys everyday for 2 hours a day, you can develop such great relationships and have such a positive impact not only on their sports careers, but on who they are. I know my coaches really had an impact on me and I hope to do the same.

Honestly my biggest fear is that I can’t reach kids, that there’s going to be kids that I can’t help. I don’t mean to sound cocky, but I know history well and I’m very good with students, so being a good “teacher” is not a major concern of mine. My fear is that there’s going to be students that I’m going to see struggle, not with school but with outside factors, and that I’m not going to be able to do enough. I know I can be a great teacher to the the kids who are good students, and I know I can befriend and develop strong relationships with those students. I’m worried about the students that are going to hate me because they hate school and because they have turmoil in their lives. I just hope I can help those kids.